

## Claims

1. A method for processing graphic information present on mailpieces,  
5 whereby the graphic information is acquired, evaluated and stored, and whereby the  
acquired graphic information is used for physically sorting mailpieces,  
characterized in that,  
on the basis of a first result of the evaluation of the graphic information, a  
database is augmented by additional sorting features, whereby the surface video data  
10 contained in the graphic information and/or the statistical evaluation are stored, and  
whereby moreover, on the basis of the augmented database, a second result of the  
evaluation is ascertained so that, on the basis of the results of the evaluation, the  
graphic information of a first mailpiece is sorted, whereby this sorting of the graphic  
information of the first mailpiece triggers a physical sorting of a second mailpiece,  
15 and furthermore, in that another physical sorting of the first mailpiece resulting from a  
reference code is carried out.
2. The method according to claim 1,  
characterized in that  
20 a determination of postage indicia present on the mailpieces is carried out.
3. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
the evaluation of the graphic information takes place via a data line at a differ-  
25 ent point in time and/or at a different place than the point in time and/or the place of  
the physical sorting resulting from the reference code.
4. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
30 the evaluation of the graphic information of the mailpieces comprises a  
statistical evaluation of the graphic information present on the mailpieces.

5. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that

the authenticity of sender franking is verified in that the graphic information  
present on the mailpieces is compared to the information expected for this mailpiece,  
5 whereby the expected information corresponds to a determination that preceded the  
comparison, and moreover, the postage indicium is registered as being forged if the  
information at hand differs from the expected information.

6. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
10 characterized in that

the authenticity of a digital postage indicium is verified, whereby the encoded  
digital information contained in the graphic information is deciphered and compared  
to the unencrypted graphic information present on the appertaining mailpiece to see if  
it matches and, if it does not match, the postage indicium is registered as being forged.

15

7. The method according to claim 6,  
characterized in that

a hash value is generated from data contained in the graphic information in  
order to check whether this hash value matches a hash value contained in the encoded  
20 information and, if it does not match, the postage indicium is registered as being  
forged.

8. The method according to claim 7,  
characterized in that

25 the hash value is formed taking into account information about mailpiece data,  
taking into account a temporarily stored random number and taking into account a  
loading procedure identification number.

9. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
30 characterized in that

the evaluation of the graphic information of the mailpiece is carried out  
according to sorting features.

10. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
the time of day of a sorting event is a sorting feature of the evaluation.

5 11. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
another sorting feature of the evaluation is the date of a sorting event.

10 12. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
another sorting feature of the evaluation is the starting time and/or the ending  
time of a sorting event.

15 13. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
another sorting feature of the evaluation is the specification of production  
machines in a mail or freight distribution center.

20 14. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
another sorting feature is the value of the insufficient postage determined by  
means of the evaluation.

25 15. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims,  
characterized in that  
another sorting feature is the SFM identification determined by means of the  
evaluation.

30 16. The method according to claim 15,  
characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, it is checked whether the SFM identification is  
readable.

17. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, it is checked whether the determined SFM identification is present in a negative file.

5

18. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, it is checked whether the determined SFM identification is present in a positive file.

10

19. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, it is checked whether this is a case of SFM insufficient postage.

15

20. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, it is checked whether the SFM currency is readable.

20

21. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, it is checked whether the SFM postage indicium is readable.

25

22. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, the date of a PCF ("PCF date") is checked.

30

23. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that  
as another sorting feature, it is checked whether a PCF version ("PCF version") is present.

24. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that as another sorting feature, it is checked whether PCF insufficient postage ("PCF insufficient postage") is present.

5

25. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that as another sorting feature, it is checked whether a determined PCF is present in a negative file ("PCF in negative file").

10

26. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that data of the automated checking of the postage is stored.

15

27. The method according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that results of the evaluation of graphic information are stored in a database.

28. A device for processing graphic information present on the surfaces of mailpieces comprising one or more image processing units, whereby the image processing units have means for acquiring, evaluating and storing the graphic information of mailpieces, and having at least one means for recognizing different types of postage of the mailpieces, whereby the image processing units as well as the means for recognizing the types of postage are in a data network,

25

characterized in that

the data network is connected to at least one means for performing a physical sorting of mailpieces, at least one means for generating a reference code, and at least one means for evaluating the graphic information, so that the means for evaluating the graphic information of a first mailpiece ascertains a first result of the evaluation, whereby the data network is also connected to a database that has been augmented by an additional sorting feature, for determining a second result of the evaluation and additionally, at least one means for performing the physical sorting of a second mailpiece is activated, whereby another physical sorting of the first mailpiece is carried out on the basis of the reference code.

30

29. The device according to claim 28,  
characterized in that  
at least one means for evaluating the graphic information of the mailpieces is  
5 located inside and/or outside of a mail distribution center.

30. The device according to one or both of claims 28 and 29,  
characterized in that  
at least one means for evaluating the graphic information of the mailpieces has  
10 at least one input device as well as at least one display device so that evaluation  
results as well as surface video data of the mailpieces are displayed to a user and  
edited by the user employing the input device.

31. The device according to claim 30,  
15 characterized in that  
conventional analog and/or digital video equipment is used as display devices.

32. The device according to one or both of the preceding claims 30 or 31,  
characterized in that  
20 PC-based display devices are used that allow a filtering of the video data and  
thus a detailed depiction of specific segments of the video data.

33. The device according to claim 30,  
characterized in that  
25 the input devices consist of PC keyboards, numerical keypads, barcode scan-  
ners and/or means for speech recognition.